

White Ash

Fraxinus americana



The White Ash tree is quite common at Niquette Bay State Park, but is never a dominating tree. Both humans and animals find it useful; due to its strength, the wood is used to make baseball bats and oars. In fact, the tree became part of baseball fame when Louisville Slugger began using White Ash wood to make bats! Animals, particularly birds, eat its winged seeds throughout the year.



Louisville Slugger began using White Ash wood to make bats

From left to right: Notice the diamond-shaped corky bark (Lake Champlain Land Trust staff photograph); White Ash leaves are compound, as shown, and they have single-winged seeds (courtesy of the University of Maine Extension); White Ash flourishes in forests with rich, well drained soils throughout the Eastern U.S. (courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service).



To identify the White Ash tree, first look at the leaves. Like all ash trees, it has compound leaves that grow opposite each other on the branch. The ash trees (White/Black/Green Ash and Box Elder) are the only trees in Vermont to have opposite-branched, compound leaves. White Ash also has bark that grows in distinctive diamond-shaped ridges. Try pressing your fingernail into the bark; if it feels somewhat soft and cork-like, it might be an Ash tree! The trunk is typically quite straight, and the seeds appear to be comprised of a single 'wing' (samara). In the fall, look for White Ash leaves to turn yellow, purple, or both!



A Lake Champlain Land Trust Nature Snapshot

Protecting lakeshore and natural areas since 1978

www.LCLT.org

